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DE RUEHGO #1191/01 3531009
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 191009Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6945
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0769
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4316
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7860
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5420
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1279
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1212
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001191

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
S/GAC FOR AMBASSADOR DYBUL
BANGKOK FOR RDMA
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#) [KHIV](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: BURMA: HELPING PHYU PHYU THIN

REF: A. RANGOON 1178

- [1](#)B. RANGOON 1153
- [1](#)C. RANGOON 744
- [1](#)D. RANGOON 742
- [1](#)E. 06 RANGOON 1170

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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: HIV/AIDS activist and NLD youth member Phyu Phyu Thin does not want to come out of hiding, contrary to Ref A. She believes she would be quickly arrested and unable to assist her patients. Phyu Phyu Thin's patients are in desperate need of quick funding in order to continue their Anti Retroviral Therapy. Post recommends USG funding be approved on an urgent basis (see action request in paragraph 7). End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Pol/econ chief met with HIV/AIDS activist Phyu Phyu Thin who is in hiding from the authorities. Pol/econ chief requested the meeting with Phyu Phyu Thin to clarify conflicting reports we had received regarding Phyu Phyu Thin's wishes to come out of hiding to help her HIV/AIDS patients (Ref A). Since its inception, the regime has harassed Phyu Phyu Thin's organization, Friends of the Red Ribbon, because of its affiliation with the NLD's HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Committee, and because many high-profile 88 Generation Students leaders are also members of her organization (Ref E).

[1](#)3. (C) Phyu Phyu Thin told us that she does not want to come out of hiding, but is desperately worried about the forty-one HIV/AIDS patients that her NGO assists in obtaining Anti Retroviral (ARV) medication. Phyu Phyu Thin said that she would likely be arrested as soon as she emerged from hiding and would be unable to assist her patients in any case. Many of her patients were from outside of Rangoon and had been sheltered at the Maggin Monastery that the regime recently ordered closed (Ref B). Thirty patients are staying at two houses in South Dagon Township and the remaining ten are

spread out throughout Rangoon. Phyu Phyu Thin's close friend and assistant, Yar Zar, is currently looking after the patients and trying to find funding for them to continue their ARV medication that will run out at the end of December.

¶4. (C) Last January, when MSF Holland (AZG) stopped providing ARV therapy for new patients due to lack of funding, Phyu Phyu Thin and her organization began funding and distributing ARV therapy to her patients under the supervision of a sympathetic government doctor (Ref D). Once ARV treatment is initiated, it must be continued to avoid the possibility that a drug-resistant strain of the virus could develop, which would endanger effective ARV therapy for all HIV/AIDS patients. Yar Zar has been approaching various NGOs requesting assistance but has not yet been able to secure adequate funding to continue the treatment for all of the patients.

¶5. (C) Although the NLD "uncles" and Dr. Tin Myo Win (ASSK's doctor) claim to fund (and often take credit for) Phyu Phyu Thin's activities, we have heard from numerous pro-democracy activists involved in assisting HIV/AIDS patients that her organization receives almost no money from the NLD or Dr. Tin Myo Win. Phyu Phyu Thin is growing increasingly frustrated by reports that donations, both foreign and domestic, are solicited in the name of her organization, but the patients never see any of the money. Dr. Tin Myo Win recently claimed to poloff that he had raised \$3,000 for Friends of the Red Ribbon over the last two months. Phyu Phyu Thin told pol/econ chief yesterday that her organization had received none of this money.

¶6. (C). We also understand that NLD Spokesman U Myint Thein may have been instructed by the Uncles to convince Phyu Phyu Thin to come out of hiding precisely so she would be arrested in order to prevent her from continuing her activities, which the Uncles feel puts the NLD at risk.

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¶7. (C) Action Request: Post believes there is an urgent need to provide quick, adequate, and consistent funding for ARV therapy for Phyu Phyu Thin's patients. We will contact AZG, UNAIDS, and the Three Diseases Fund to explore possible avenues for delivering the medications to them. However, they will likely need additional funding or the medications to handle the increased patient load. Post strongly recommends quick action by Washington to provide Post the necessary funding for medications. By so doing, we would be supporting an organization closely affiliated with the pro-democracy movement that provides the healthcare services the Than Shwe regime neglects. This also bolsters the local organization's image to the public. ACTION REQUEST: Please advise if we will be able to be responsive to this request from a heroine of the pro-democracy movement.

¶8. (C) Comment: The increasing disarray in the pro-democracy movement caused by the Than Shwe regime's crackdown is revealing some of the ugly secrets inside the pro-democracy movement, which offers some insight into why change has been so difficult to achieve in Burma. The pro-democracy movement has never been unified, as can be seen by the numerous organizations inside and outside of Burma. The NLD Uncles, former generals under the Ne Win regime, are in their 80s and in ill health. They have long tried to stifle the desires of younger NLD members to be more active. They have expelled many members and recently tried to expel labor activist Su Su Nwe, for thwarting their orders to stay quiet and do nothing. While younger members still revere Aung San Suu Kyi, and look to her as a unifying figure, this same respect does not transfer to the Uncles. Min Ko Naing and the 88 Generation Students were able to tap into the growing impatience with the Uncles to unify the students and younger NLD members to revitalize the pro-democracy movement over the past year. But now those unifiers have been arrested and the Uncles are trying to reassert their

authority even if it means that NLD members such as Phyu Phyu
Thin Go to prison. The Uncles are effectively doing Than
Shwe's bidding. This is why our support for the younger
generation who want change now is so very critical at this
time. End comment.
VILLAROSA